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ABSTRACT

This issue of the Australian Early Childhood Association Research in Practice Series focuses on attention difficulties in young children and is directed to parents, child caregivers, and others interested in the care and education of young children. The booklet describes behaviors and characteristics common in children with attention difficulties, identifies differences between an active and a hyperactive child, delineates characteristics of attention difficulties, and discusses attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and its diagnosis. The booklet also outlines strategies that adults can use to help children with attention difficulties to manage their world, including giving simple, clear instructions, offering clear routines and structure, setting clear rules, and giving children time to complete requests. The booklet also explains ineffective strategies for managing behavior and provides suggestions for parents, caregivers, and teachers to enhance the social skills and self-esteem of young children with attention difficulties. The booklet concludes with suggestions for additional assistance for children for whom behavior management strategies are not enough. (Contains 18 references.) (KB)

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Young children with

attention difficulties

—how can we help?

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by Diana Roe

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The series aims to provide practical, easy to read, up-to-date information and support to a growing national readership of early childhood workers. The books bring together the best information available on wide ranging topics and are an ideal resource for children's services workers and others interested in the care and education of young children. Books produced in previous years have now become standard texts in many early childhood courses.

The Research in Practice Series Committee invites contributions on all aspects of the education and care of young children. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the field, contributions from all disciplines concerned with young children and their families are welcome.

All Research in Practice Series manuscripts are required to undergo a blind review by readers experienced in the field and will not necessarily be published. The style of the Research in Practice books must be simple and informative. Jargon and the presumption of prior knowledge should be avoided. Guidelines for contributors are available on request from the Publications Section.

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Australian Early Childhood Association Inc.
PO Box 105, Watson ACT 2602
Tel: (02) 6241 6900 Fax: (02) 6241 5547
Sales line (toll-free): 1800 356 900
Email: national@aeca.org.au

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Young Children with Attention Difficulties

—*How Can We Help?*

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About the author

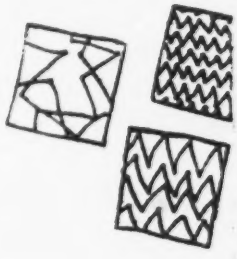
Diana Roe is a child and family psychologist working in Canberra, with a background in early childhood education. She has worked for more than 20 years with young children and their families both in the school system and privately. Diana has a particular interest in supporting families with individual needs, and in helping families and children in crisis. She has worked with many children and their families where difficulties in attention and impulsivity have been causing concern. She has also presented training courses in the area for professionals, parents, and carers.

Some tips for parents, carers and teachers

- Praise! Praise! Praise! The best way of ensuring that behaviour continues is to be positive about it. Notice when the child is doing the right thing.
- Use novelty. Children with attention difficulties do better when activities are novel, highly interesting and different. Save some interesting new activity or treat for a 'difficult' time.
- Have clear rules written down—with pictures if necessary. It's much easier to obey the rules when you know what they are.
- Provide feedback to the child—let her know if she is doing something well, or if a rule is being broken. Some children never really know why they are in trouble and feedback helps.
- These children feel much safer with limits and boundaries. Make them clear and explicit.
- Be as predictable as you can. If there is going to be a change, give lots of warnings.
- Deflect or redirect. Sometimes it is much easier and better not to provoke a confrontation. Withdraw from a power struggle or help the child to focus on something else.
- Ask the child for ideas, e.g. What other ways can you think of to help you get ready in the morning?' or 'If you were a mum, how could you stop a kid who runs out on the road?' Often they may be able to come up with ways to manage a problem or to deal with bad behaviour.
- Plan for the unpredictable. Explain why things might sometimes be different within the safety of structure. 'Sometimes we might not be back in time for a story. If that happens we will have a longer one the next day.'
- Time-out works well—use an egg timer, or stopwatch and let the child be responsible for knowing when time is up.

See page 12 for more tips.

Young Children with Attention Difficulties —*How Can We Help?*



Many young children have difficulties with attention or concentration, or with being impulsive. For some children this may be a developmental stage which they outgrow. For others, it may be part of their normal behavioural make-up. For a few children, this difficulty in attending may cause ongoing problems in their behaviour at home and at school, in their learning, and in their interactions with others. These children may be diagnosed as having an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

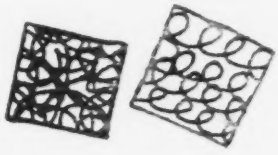
This book has been written for parents, families, teachers, and carers of young children to give some ideas about helping children who have difficulties with attention, whether this is a short-term or ongoing difficulty. It offers practical and positive techniques for helping these children manage their behaviour and build self-esteem to help overcome learning or social difficulties.

Allocate time each day for special 'talking time'.

What is an attention difficulty?

Children who have difficulty with attention and concentration may display a range of behaviours. In general they are likely to be distractible, impulsive, excessively fidgety or active, and to have great trouble remaining on task. Some children may be 'dreamers' who often find it hard to organise themselves and don't seem to be able to follow instructions.

All of these behaviours can be normal for children at a particular stage of development. An attention difficulty may cause concern when a child does not develop the concentration or impulse control



displayed by other children their age. This is why ADHD is rarely diagnosed under five years of age—it is quite normal for children under five to be very active and distractible at times. However, some very young distractible or impulsive children may need help managing their behaviour if it is causing problems for themselves or others.

Behaviours that may cause concern

Some of the behaviours which may be seen when a child has an attention problem include:

Inattentiveness: Children who are inattentive often lose focus. They 'faze out', daydream, or lose concentration very quickly. Parents and carers notice that inattentive children often forget what they have been told—particularly if they have been asked to do more than one thing at a time. Their short-term memory is affected—they forget things they see or hear within a short time even though they may have a very good memory for things that happened in the past.

Sometimes it is hard to work out whether an inattentive child is listening to you—he or she looks blank when something is said. At other times, particularly when the activity is interesting or different, the child concentrates well and is 'switched on', e.g. with television or computer games.

An active child can concentrate when interested.

A quiet, well-behaved, inattentive child may miss out on a great deal of learning before it is realised that she is having difficulty attending.

All children have times when they do not concentrate or listen, and everyone needs time to daydream. However, this behaviour becomes concerning when it starts to cause major problems for the child and his learning, or with social interaction.

Impulsiveness: Children who are very impulsive do not think about consequences. They are the children who hit out, run away, get hurt, lose their tempers, and break things. These children do things even when they know they shouldn't. Impulsive

children are the ones about whom parents and carers might say 'I told him and he knows he mustn't, but he keeps doing it'.

Many two-year-olds act impulsively but, by the age of four, are able to keep some control on their behaviour. The impulsive child does not develop this control to the same degree—he or she may talk over other people or push past without even noticing.

These children may often demand and expect instant gratification—'I want this and I want it now!' They find it hard to wait for adults to finish what they are doing to attend to them. Impulsiveness and the need for instant gratification are often the main reasons why families or schools seek help for a child's behaviour.

Hyperactivity: Not all children with attention problems are overactive. Those that are seem to be always busy, always active, always running, or always moving. They often have difficulty sleeping, and may exhaust their family or carers with their energy. Sitting still is really hard for them—they jiggle, fidget, or bounce. Some overactive children constantly touch things; others are only happy when they are outside where they can run. Some children are very active and enthusiastic, but can relax at times. The really hyperactive child rarely relaxes and is only able to concentrate for short periods, usually while doing such things as watching television, playing computer games or in a one-to-one situation.

Distractibility: When a child is distractible, he or she finds it very difficult to remain on task. Every little sound, person going by, or interesting thought will distract the child. Even when doing something they really enjoy, like being read to, these children will jump at every interruption and have problems getting back to the story.

Distractible children find large groups quite difficult because of the stimulation provided by others. They have to work very hard to filter out all the noises or sights. They work and play best where there are fewer people, and the situation is calm.

Differences between an active child and a hyperactive child

Active child

- *Can concentrate when interested.*
- *Can relax and unwind sometimes.*
- *No major sleep disturbances.*
- *No major problems with mood.*

Hyperactive child

- *Rarely concentrates except on TV or computer games.*
- *Rarely relaxes.*
- *Often has trouble getting to sleep or wakes very early.*
- *Very moody, with quick mood changes.*

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Disorganisation: Many children with attention problems find it hard to organise themselves. They forget things, lose things, and are often in a muddle. Young children who have problems with organisation may get completely mixed up when trying to dress themselves or get very messy when they are eating. These children need outside structure and support to help them manage and organise themselves.

Social difficulties: A factor that causes a great deal of concern to parents is the social difficulty faced by many children with attention problems. They often miss important aspects of social interaction and have a hard time 'fitting in'. Their impulsivity and disorganisation means they don't always follow rules nor do they follow the normal social cues that govern most of our behaviour with others.

Difficulties with coordination, learning problems etc: Some children who have attention difficulties may also have problems in other areas. They may be clumsy, may have fine or gross motor delay, or may have problems with learning. Research suggests that many children with diagnosed ADHD also have some form of specific learning disability, which may mean difficulties with learning to read, write or do maths. Dr Russell Barkley (Barkley, 1994) suggests that 25%–35% of children with ADHD have a specific learning disability.

Notice when children are doing the right thing.

What is ADHD and how is it diagnosed?

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a condition which affects somewhere between 2% and 5% of children. Young children under five or six years old are not often diagnosed with ADHD although their behaviour may lead to concerns that they may have this condition. For many children the stress and demands of school are often the time when more help is needed and a diagnosis is sought.

Until recently these children have had a range of other diagnoses, including:

- Hyperactive
- Minimal Brain Dysfunction
- Learning Disabled
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) with or without hyperactivity
- Hyper-kinetic Impulse Disorder.

No single cause for ADHD is known. It is suspected that it is a combination of heredity, environment, and biological factors. The most recent research suggests that these children have an altered brain biochemistry. Children who have been diagnosed with ADHD may also have other difficulties, e.g. Specific Learning Disability or Conduct Disorder.

Referral to a doctor, psychologist or school counsellor is often the first step to having a child diagnosed. A great deal of information is considered before a diagnosis is made. This may include:

- behaviour checklists from parents, school, preschool or child care;
- assessment of the child by a psychologist including specific tests to measure visual or auditory attention;
- history of the child's birth, early development and ongoing difficulties;

Characteristics of a child with attention difficulties

Some children may only show a few of these problems—others may display all of them.

- *Excessively fidgets or squirms.*
- *Difficulty remaining seated.*
- *Easily distracted.*
- *Difficulty awaiting turn in games.*
- *Blurts out answers to questions.*
- *Difficulty following instructions.*
- *Difficulty sustaining attention.*
- *Shifts from one activity to another.*
- *Difficulty playing quietly.*
- *Daydreams.*
- *Often talks excessively.*
- *Often interrupts.*
- *Often doesn't listen to what is said.*
- *Often loses things.*
- *Often does dangerous things.*
- *Inconsistent behaviour.*
- *Impaired impulse control.*
- *Need for immediate gratification.*

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Children with attention difficulties often are not in control of their behaviour. They need help from adults to manage their world.

- observation of the child's pattern of behaviour; and
- a full medical check to rule out any other reasons for the difficulties.

Diagnosis of ADHD will be made if a child is showing symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity to an extent that is causing severe difficulty in two or more settings.

What works in managing behaviour?

Children with attention difficulties often are not in control of their behaviour. They need help from adults to manage their world. This may include:

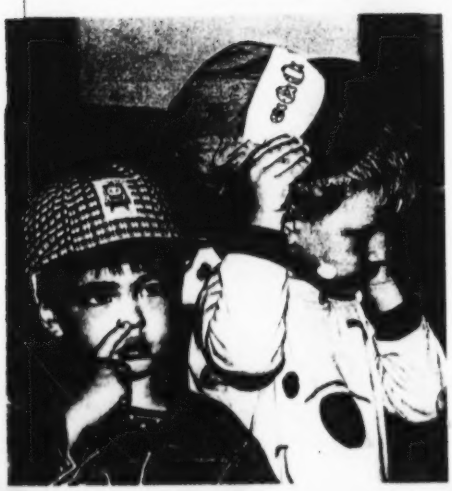
Gaining their attention first

Use eye contact or a quiet touch to make sure that a child is listening to you. If things are out of control, time in a quiet place first will give the child a chance to recover enough to give attention.

Giving simple clear instruction

For children who have trouble paying attention, long or involved explanations just make it harder to know what is expected. **Some children may manage better with just one instruction at a time.** Try 'go and hang your coat up' rather than 'go and hang your coat up, choose something to do inside, and don't forget that we are going to the park later today.'

Break down large tasks into small ones.



Demonstrating what is required

If the child is not managing easily with verbal instruction, **try demonstrating what is needed.** Some children learn better with visual clues, or by physical copying. Practicing how to do something in a quiet, non-hurried situation makes it easier to try later on when there are more distractions.

Offering clear routines and structure

Children with attention difficulties thrive on knowing what is going to happen. Structure and routine really help them to organise themselves and feel secure. If there is a change to the normal routine it is worth giving a warning, and being very clear about what is going to happen instead, e.g. 'Today we're not going to preschool because Aunty Jenny is coming. We're going to the airport to pick her up after breakfast, and coming back home. You can go to preschool tomorrow.'

Structure and routine will help children to organise themselves and feel secure.

Helping with transition times

Changes of routine or transition times can be difficult. The child is not sure of what is going to happen and may feel out of control. **Sometimes they may need adult help to provide that control.** Warnings and reminders are useful.

Setting clear rules

A firm structure and knowledge of what is required helps many children to manage their behaviour better. The rules need to be simple and clear and seen as fair by the child. If children are involved in formulating rules they are far more likely to keep them (and less likely to argue!) Even very young children can help make rules. Ask questions like 'Do you think that people should hit each other?', 'What do you think about running inside?'

Reinforcing/acknowledging acceptable behaviour

Some of these children start feeling that everything they do is wrong. **By catching them when they are doing something good**, even if it is just expected behaviour, we are helping them distinguish what is appropriate and, at the same time, giving them positive feedback about their behaviour.

Removing anything that makes it worse

If a child is having difficulty with managing, sometimes just changing the environment helps. Look carefully at what the problem is and see if there

A 'talking ball' or other object helps children learn about taking turns and not interrupting.

is another way around it. One little boy was having major problems with losing everything, particularly his lunch boxes. By replacing the lunchbox with a paper bag, his mother saved a lot of money, and he had one less thing to have to remember! Another distractible child was not managing at story time when sitting with other children. The teacher gave her a chair to sit on in the quietest corner, and she was able to keep her distance from others and so enjoy the story.

Guiding rather than pushing

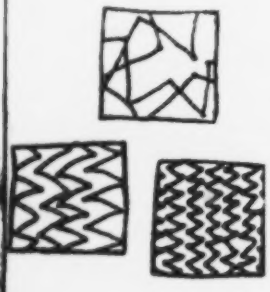
It has been said that these children have 'big engines with poor brakes.' **Steer them in the direction you want by telling them what is needed, demonstrate if necessary, and then allow them to do it in their own time with encouragement.** Pushing often causes confrontation and no-one wins.

Giving time to complete requests

The time-honoured 'counting to three' often works very well. **State the rule or the thing that needs to be done, then quietly count to three with a five second wait after each number.** This allows the child to overcome the immediate refusal that so many of these children do automatically.

Offering star charts

A lot of programs for children with attention difficulties rely on behavioural charts. They can work well if the behaviour is clearly stated, e.g. 'playing outside without hitting people' or 'packing away when I am asked before the timer goes' rather than 'being good'. **Rewarding over short periods of time makes it much easier for the child to understand why he is being rewarded.** Star charts and other such programs can be used with children from about four years on, but only work for a short time with young children (sometimes only about two weeks or less) and are best used to change one or two particular behaviours.



What doesn't work in managing behaviour

Parents and carers of young children with attention difficulties can often feel overwhelmed by the constancy of the behaviour. It is easy in these circumstances to try anything at all that might help, but most research has found that some things just make the behaviour worse. These include:

Shouting

It rarely helps to shout at a young child who has made a mistake through inattention or impulsivity. Many children who are inattentive need help in focusing in on the speaker before being asked to do something. Often shouting can confuse the child more, or make her angry. As a regular way of discipline it may encourage a child to have 'selective deafness' and respond less and less to verbal information.

Smacking

Smacking is often more a way of an adult coping with his or her frustration rather than a means of helping behaviour. It gives the message that hitting is all right so long as you are bigger or more powerful. Smacking is likely to make the child more defiant, and more and more force becomes necessary. For a child with attention or impulsivity problems, it is much better to model other ways of saying 'this is not acceptable'.

Saying 'no' repeatedly

Many parents and carers are aware that with a young challenging child, most interactions involve saying 'No, you can't do that,''No, that's not allowed,' 'No, you have to stop,' 'No, I don't have time,' etc. **Try more positive ways of giving the message, and sometimes take time to reflect on whether saying 'no' is really necessary.** Redirecting, making other suggestions, answering questions with 'Maybe another time' or 'It's time for morning tea now. Afterwards we will have time to try that.'

Allow escape valves! Give time for a run outside or time to be noisy.

When things are out of control:

- *Let everyone (adults included) have some time out.*
- *Separate any children who need to be apart.*
- *Give a drink, something to eat.*
- *Distract if possible.*
- *Know what soothes the child and use it—a wash, music, looking at a book, a bath.*
- *Know what soothes you too!*
- *Wait until emotions are in control before looking at the problem again.*

One mother who was concerned with the number of times she was answering all her son's ideas with 'no' made a resolution not to use the word all day. It worked like a charm—he found it much easier to refocus when he wasn't hearing a negative all the time. Another parent whose child was intent on her buying every advertised toy decided to make a list of all the things wanted. It's much less negative to say 'That looks wonderful. I'll put it on the list for things to think about for Christmas.'

Trying to focus on all the difficult behaviours at once

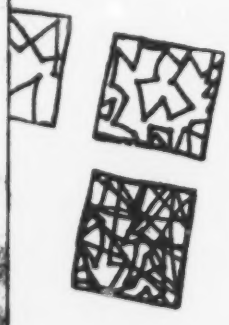
Most children who have difficulty with attention and distractibility have a range of behaviours that are annoying or upsetting. Try to focus on only one or two of these behaviours at a time; this helps the child really learn to manage a behaviour change, and also stops the feeling 'I never do anything right.'

Confronting

Power struggles with a young child are very frustrating for child and adult alike. A child with an attention difficulty is *not* deliberately trying to be naughty, but as all children do, will resist and escalate the behaviour when a power struggle ensues.

Helping with social skills

Many young children with attention difficulties have trouble in managing social interaction. Because of their difficulty in maintaining attention they may miss important parts of a conversation, or not pick up normal social cues. They may come into a group wanting to play, but tease or hit or push the others. They may be bossy or always want to have all the toys. Impulsiveness also causes problems—they may lash out at other children if something goes wrong, or find it very hard to stop a behaviour once they start doing it. Sometimes these children will copy 'silly' behaviour of other children, but get carried away and not know when to stop. They then cannot understand why they get into trouble but the one from whom they copied does not.



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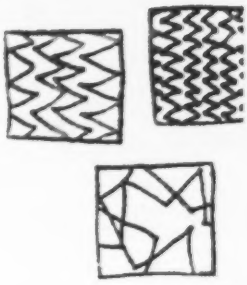
Give the child strategies for joining a group—suggest they take a toy over to share, or say 'Let's play ...' Going with them to demonstrate works well. Most of these children play much better with a small group rather than a large one, so keep the situation small. If a confrontation is starting, try to act quickly to redirect their attention.



Practising by themselves or with an adult really helps children with social difficulties. Ask questions like 'What could you do if someone took the toy you wanted?', 'What are some things you could do if Johnny started teasing you?'

If hitting or attacking other children is a continuing problem, clear rules will keep the situation more in control. Some children with attention problems do better with a friend who is a little older and more able to manage the impulsive behaviour.

Building self-esteem

Children who have difficulties in managing their behaviour or in learning are at risk of low self-esteem. When children are told over and over again that they are not listening or that they are doing the wrong thing, they start to believe that they are bad. One of the most important things that can be done for young children with attention difficulties is to strengthen their belief in themselves—that they *can* do things, that they are not *always* naughty.

A loving, supportive, and consistent environment is essential for all children, but particularly for those children who have attention difficulties. Try to focus on the child's strengths as much as possible. Many of these children are creative and have good skills which can be tapped and extended. Reframing behaviour and problems often makes it easier to focus on the positives, and may bring some humour into the situation, e.g.'You are so quick at doing things, Tony, sometimes you even do the thing before you know what it is!'

Having little, but important, jobs such as looking after a pet will help to boost self-esteem.

One of the most important things that can be done for young children with attention difficulties is to strengthen their belief in themselves—that they can do things, that they are not always naughty.

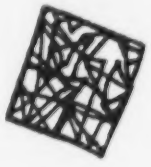
Every child has some area of interest or expertise which can be encouraged. They will also find it easier to focus attention on something which interests them or that they do well. To have a sport or hobby that they enjoy and do well is a life-time investment, so it is worth really searching for the right one.

Children need to know that it is OK to make a mistake occasionally. Adults can help by pointing out that they make mistakes too, and that we can learn from these and try again.

Managing responsibility is a strong self-esteem booster. Having little (but important) jobs, looking after plants or pets, helping parents do a job, all encourage responsibility.

Tips for parents and carers

- Praise! Praise! Praise! The best way of ensuring that behaviour continues is to be positive about it. Notice when the child is doing the right thing.
- Use novelty. Children with attention difficulties do better when activities are novel, highly interesting and different. Save some interesting new activity or treat for a 'difficult' time.
- Have clear rules written down—with pictures if necessary. It's much easier to obey the rules when you know what they are.
- Provide feedback to the child—let her know if she is doing something well, or if a rule is being broken. Some children never really know why they are in trouble and feedback helps.
- These children feel much safer with limits and boundaries. Make them clear and explicit.
- Be as predictable as you can. If there is going to be a change, give lots of warnings.
- Deflect or redirect. Sometimes it is much easier and better not to provoke a confrontation. Withdraw from a power struggle or help the child to focus on something else.

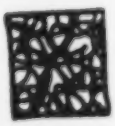


- Ask the child for ideas, e.g. What other ways can you think of to help you get ready in the morning?' or 'If you were a Mum how could you stop a kid who runs out on the road?' Often they may be able to come up with ways to manage a problem or to deal with bad behaviour.
- Plan for the unpredictable. Explain why things might sometimes be different within the safety of structure. 'Sometimes we might not be back in time for a story. If that happens we will have a longer one the next day.'
- Time-out works well—use an egg timer, or stopwatch and let the child be responsible for knowing when time is up.
- Allow escape valves. Give time for a run outside, or a little bit of time to be noisy.
- Use time-out also as a positive—give the child the chance to go on an errand or outside before things start to get difficult.
- Be one step ahead!
- Plan for the difficult times—have a treat or a special activity ready, or organise someone else to take the child for a while.
- If you know a child will not manage an activity, do something else. If grocery shopping is horrific for everyone, give it a miss for a while. Go shopping late at night or do it while he is somewhere else.
- Help children avoid situations that are going to be over-stimulating (large shopping malls can be overwhelming, for example). Find another option that you know will be more helpful—try a smaller shopping centre, or go for a very short time.
- Sometimes a quick touch or eye contact will 'bring back' a child who is not attending.

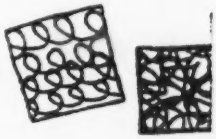
Use novelty—children are more likely to concentrate when activities are interesting and different.

Save some interesting, new activity for a 'difficult' time.

- Break down large tasks into small ones. If there is some tidying up to do, or it's time to get dressed, suggest one thing at a time, e.g. 'Let's put the books away and see what's left after that.'
- Listen to the child—encourage them to talk about what has been happening.
- Allocate time each day when you and the child have a special 'talking time', even if it is only five minutes. Make a quiet space and ask questions like: 'What have you done really well today', 'Did you manage something really hard for you?' This is a good time to give feedback about positive things you've seen.
- When talking in a group larger than two, a 'talking ball' or other object for the speaker to hold helps children learn about taking turns and not interrupting.
- Help disorganised children manage their own space by getting rid of junk, having easy-to-manage shelves, and having a place for everything.
- Give children choices, e.g. 'Do you want to come outside with us or stay here?' or 'Do you want to give David the toy back, or sit quietly by yourself for a little while?'
- Grandma's rule, i.e. 'First you eat your cabbage, then your dessert', works well for these children. A little something to look forward to helps everyone.
- A 'quiet' corner is very useful. Books, soft toys and cuddly cushions can make a peaceful, relaxing place to go to when things become overwhelming.
- Teach relaxation—many inattentive children benefit from learning to slow down and relax both their muscles and their minds. Music or relaxation tapes are useful for times when things are becoming tense.



- Children need the opportunity to let off steam in a safe way. Adults can model ways to manage anger and frustration and children will benefit from seeing how they cope.
- Give yourself time out too—these children can be exhausting and frustrating!



If simple measures are not enough—what other help is available?

For some children behaviour management measures are not enough. Their difficulties with attention, distractibility, and impulsiveness are causing major problems for themselves, their teachers and their family. For these children other help is available.

Referral to a school counsellor, psychologist, doctor, or health professional is the first step to a full assessment of the child's needs and the most appropriate way to help. Some options that may be considered include:

For some children behaviour management measures are not enough ... for these children other help is available.

Medication

Many children diagnosed as having an Attention Deficit Disorder may benefit from medication. In general, stimulant medication is given which acts to help the child lessen their overactive behaviour and increase focus. A paediatrician will assess the child, consider all information, and then work closely with the family to adjust the dosage appropriate to the child's needs. For some children medication works well to improve learning and behaviour.

Behaviour modification

An individual plan to manage a child's behaviour may help a great deal. Many of the techniques already suggested may be used; they need to be implemented in a structured and consistent way by all adults working with the child.

Children feel safer with limits and boundaries—make them clear and explicit.

Counselling

Some children with attention difficulties may benefit from talking to a counsellor about ways to manage their behaviour, particularly using techniques such as behavioural rehearsal (practicing how to manage behaviour in different situations) Parents and siblings may also benefit from counselling to deal with the stresses involved with living with a child with severe behavioural problems.

Other options

For some children diet is important. Parents may be aware that certain foods increase their child's difficult behaviour (particularly overactivity and irritability) and it is sensible to avoid them. Some children will do well on an exclusion diet, but this needs to be supervised by a dietitian or doctor. Biofeedback and neurofeedback are new experimental options for children with ADHD. They work by teaching the child to increase the brain waves which improve focus and attention.

A number of natural therapies and alternative strategies are also being used to help these children. At present no research has found that these have significant therapeutic impact, but some parents have found that their child has made improvement with their use. These include the use of multivitamins, zinc, fish oils and trace elements, and neurophysiological retraining (patterning, optometric visual training and sensory integration.)

Other support

There are many support groups all over Australia and New Zealand for families and workers with children with attention difficulties. ADHD support groups usually are listed in the HELP section of your telephone book. They generally provide support, information, referrals, speakers, and opportunities for attendance at group meetings.

For children who also have a specific learning disability, the SPELD organisations, also Australia-wide, provide advice and support.

The internet provides a huge amount of information about ADHD, mainly from America. This includes parent support networks, a children's newsletter, information about drug treatment and alternative management strategies.

There are many support groups all over Australia and New Zealand for families and workers with children with attention difficulties. ADHD support groups usually are listed in the HELP section of your telephone book.

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Small groups will be more successful than larger ones.

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Some children do better with a friend who is a little older and more able to manage the impulsive behaviour.

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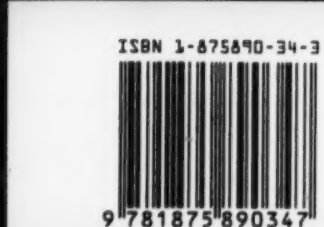

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